

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH :

Civilization is man's method of remedying God's inefficiencies.

—CHAPMAN COHEN



Freeethought

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MARCH 1977

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The Views and opinions expressed in the signed articles are not necessarily those of the Editor or IRA—Ed.

Next issue

The April 1977 Issue of Freethought will be a special number on **SEX AND MARRIAGE** vis-a-vis Religion and Rationalism.

AGONY OF A GIRL'S FATHER

1. There are fair price shops for virtually all commodities. Why not the Government open one for sale of Bridegrooms too at fair prices?
2. Banks advance loans for everything including home appliances! Why not for purchase of Bridegrooms at least on mortgage of groom?
3. Radios, T.V's, Houses, Scooters, Cars—everything is available on hire purchase system. Why not bridegrooms?

AGONY OF A BOY'S FATHER

1. Instead of Prohibiting Dowry why not the Government levy a "Dowry Tax" to improve the Central finances?
2. They have raised the marriage age but not the Dowry rates. What about my extra costs?

Free thought

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March 1977

[No. 3

Editorial

DOWRY, A PRICE TAG?

The anti-social custom of dowry has been playing financial havoc to many a middle-class family. Though this may weigh most heavily in the support the anti-dowry campaign has been deriving, it is the hidden psychological and social aspects that we will abhor.

The first is the preference for male babies as against female ones. Though girl babies give parents greater pleasure (thanks to their lasting affection and understanding), almost from childhood they are nagged by relatives and friends. Consider for instance an adage: 'If five daughters are born, even a princely parent will be reduced to a beggar.' This is carried forward to education. To endow the girl with 'too high' an education (a concept that is self-contradicting as a person can be

educated only to the extent of her intellectual ability) is considered a liability since the parents would have to 'pay' more for a bridegroom possessing qualifications higher than their daughter. This same deterrent continues in seeking jobs too.

The sinister implications are clear. Firstly, financial (not intellectual) ability to pay dowry is the deciding factor in education (which ipso facto means girls are brought up to be married away). Secondly, husband should possess higher qualifications and should be paid for in direct proportion. Thirdly, wife's avocation should not be superior to her husbands. Where is the freedom of choice? What greater proof of subjection of one half of our population is needed?

Let us be clear on one point. In the name of abolishing dowry, we do not advocate abridging or taking away women's right of succession. While strict equality between sexes should inform this aspect, we are opposed to a premium being placed on the male as a consideration for his consent to become a partner.

Why do we have to focus attention on dowry? Liberation of women

is a must if fatalism (and through it, religion) is not to take hold of them. Such liberation will prevent mothers from indoctrinating their children. The result will be a humanist society in which the welfare of human beings will be the guiding factor. Till a socialist democracy is really established in our country, we may have to resort to these various methods of weaning people away from tradition and religion. ★

PRICE LIST OF BRIDEGROOMS

The following are the current prices of grooms. These rates are only intended for the general guidance of bride's parents. They are subject to change without notice and rates ruling on the date of betrothal will be applicable.

	UNEMPLOYED	EMPLOYED
Medical Graduates	Rs. 75,000	Rs. 1,00,000
Engineering Graduates	15,000	50,000
Post Graduates	10,000	25,000
Ordinary Graduates	5,000	15,000
P. U. C.	2,500	10,000
Matriculates	1,500	5,000
Non-matriculates	1,000	2,500
Illiterates	500	1,000

TERMS:

1. A discount of 25% will be allowed in case of widowers/divorcees.
 2. A premium of 50% will be charged for Foreign returned boys.
 3. For propertied boys, 10% of the value of the property will be charged over and above the listed prices.
 4. 10% discount will be allowed to girls who are extraordinarily beautiful or proficient in fine arts like Music, Dance etc., or decently employed.
-

DOWRY AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM

By D. ANJANEYULU

[The author, a Rationalist and a prolific writer has to his credit three books. A powerful speaker, he is the Regional Officer in the Directorate of Field Publicity, Madras—Ed]

In the year 1976 (in our country), not a day passed without cases being reported of newly married brides committing suicide by jumping into a well or a river or by setting fire to their kerosene-soaked clothes. There was, some time ago, an even more horrifying instance of a mother-in-law setting fire to the clothes of her young daughter-in-law while the latter was asleep, with the connivance of her son.

Not all these harrowing tales relate to illiterate families in the remote countryside. Some of them had occurred among the educated, well-to-do families in the large cities like Surat and Ahmedabad, Indore and Gwalior. One does not know how many such cases go unreported, for each case that is reported in the press.

The Government of Madhya Pradesh has recently issued an order to their police, medical and other departmental officers to have a close look at such cases to find out if there was any foul play. This has particular reference to the presumption against the inlaws whenever it is reported that their new daughter-in-law has ended her life in mysterious circumstances, and for no ostensible reason.

After having probed the background of an alarming number of such cases, the Government had obviously come to the conclusion, though on circumstantial evidence, that the death of the newly-wed wife was presumably not the result of a shock of happiness at joining the husband. Nor can we go away with the blissful impression that this is an exclusively regional phenomenon peculiar to States like Gujarat and Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

WHAT "DOWRY" MEANS

This is the human side of the problem of Dowry. It has other aspects too like the social, economic and cultural. Before going into each of them, one by one, let us pause a little and look into the meaning of the term 'Dowry'. By dowry is meant 'Varasulka' (or the bridegroom price) paid by the bride's party to the bridegroom (or his parents, as it happens more often) as

an inducement or consideration for marrying the bride. The natural presumption from this could be that the bride is ugly, unlettered or an imbecile worth nothing by herself and has to be cared for by the bridegroom as a drag on himself and his family; as a compensation for which he is provided with a lumpsum grant in the shape of a house, land, or preferably liquid cash, or may be an imported motor car or the wherewithal to export himself to U.S. or Iran, if he is a doctor.

"Dowry" or 'dower' could also mean the amount of cash or jewellery paid by the prospective bridegroom for the purchase of a bride. This practice of bride price (or Kanya-Sulka) is no longer in vogue among the members of the so-called civilized communities in India. So dowry has now come to mean only the price paid for the coveted bridegroom.

THE TARIFF

In the southern part of this country, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh in particular, this practice of Dowry is not only widespread but deep-rooted. We know from reliable sources that in Andhra Pradesh, especially among the landed and propertied communities, dowry, like taxation, has well-recognised, regulated tariff rate, like for example, rupees One lakh or more for an IAS bridegroom, Rs. 75,000/- for a medical graduate, Rs. 50,000/- for an engineer, Rs. 40,000/- for a State Service candidate, Rs. 25,000/- for a lecturer in Government service, Rs. 20,000/- for one in private service, and so on it goes in a descending scale.

FINANCIAL RUIN

It is possible for some persons to agree that a rich man could purchase whatever he could afford to buy with money, including an IAS bridegroom. But in this, as in other matters, the poorer people and members of the lower strata, so called, tend to imitate the manners and customs of the rich. As everyone knows, fashion, like water, flows from the higher to the lower levels, by some social law of gravitation. When the poor imitate the rich, they naturally have resort to measures which they can hardly afford. When it is beyond their means, they are forced to go to the professional money lender, who could charge any rate of interest he pleases.

This could ultimately lead not only to mortgage but sale of the little house or land that they might have. The family is economically ruined after the marriage. The remaining children will be on the streets, more are less. The result is broken homes, bankrupt families, and battered hearts—where the only ones who stand to gain are the money lender and pawnbroker. This in brief, is the economic aspect of the problem of Dowry.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Let us remember that we are no longer living in the days of Laissez faire (and of unfettered 'individual freedom') when the richest and the most privileged in society could say: 'I do what I like best and the devil take the rest'. Gone are the days when the landlord or factory magnate or High Court Judge will prefer to have a dozen children, preferably all sons, for he could afford them. No longer one could

affirm, with impunity: "I shall give three lakhs as dowry to my son-in-law, for I have thirty lakhs"

We are living in a welfare state and a progressive society in which every citizen is expected to have a social awareness, which implies that he do his duty by the citizens less fortunately placed than himself. It therefore behoves the affluent to set an example to the less affluent, to the best educated to set an example to the less educated. What applies to family planning should apply to the problem of dowry as well. So much for the social aspect.

IS IT OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE?

New for the cultural aspect of this problem. There are some learned friends, who are stout defenders of what they think are our social and cultural traditions. They might argue that 'Vara Dakshina' (another name for 'Varasulka') is a part and parcel of the hallowed custom of 'Kanyadaana' (or giving away the bride). They might, therefore, be offending the canons of Hindu tradition by abstaining from it.

It is useful to remember here that tradition is not exactly what is copied from the father and the grandfather. Most of the marriage practices with economic implications and involving financial dealings have all been the result of local custom rather than Hindu, or Vedic, tradition. They are all variations on the basic theme of keeping the family wealth close together and adding to the extent of the family farms. They have little or nothing to do with the Vedic tradition followed by the orthodox Hindus in marriage and in other ceremonies.

We have it on the authority of a Vedic 'scholar' that the practice of Dowry finds no mention in the Vedas. Nor, possibly in any of the other ancient text either. It cannot, therefore, find its sanction in religious tradition. It must needs go elsewhere for this purpose—namely, the origin of feudalism in Indian society. Some would look at it as another of the evils gathered by us with the accumulation of wealth.

LEGAL LACUNAE

The problem is easily stated. But what could be the solution? Students of law are aware that legislation prohibiting dowry has been on the Statute Book of the Central Government during the last 15 years and more (i.e. since 1961). Violation of this law is made punishable by a fine of Rs. 5,000/- or imprisonment for six months or both in deserving cases. Experienced social workers find it necessary not only to make the punishment of the violation deterrent, but the implementation of the law more strict. A professor of law recently observed that she had not come across even a single case of infringement of the Dowry Prohibition Act reported in the law reports. The Act should by no means be allowed to remain a dead letter because of the difficulty in detecting the cases of infringement and bringing the offenders to book. There are no doubt serious practical difficulties in adducing evidence and providing proof for establishing the offence. These are matters on which legislators, legal experts and social workers could contribute their ideas towards the solution of the problem.

MOBILISE PUBLIC OPINION

One cannot, however, be so naive as to imagine that the problem of dowry is so simple that it can be wished away in a trice. It does not admit of a quick and easy solution. Where social problems like dowry, prevention of child marriage and encouragement of widow re-marriage, etc. are concerned, much depends on the education of social thinking and the mobilisation of public opinion. It is, therefore, vital that the social conscience of the community at large, where it is found to be lagging behind, is brought forward to go hand in hand with the legal provisions in the statute book. It is so in the present case and hence the need for a vigorous effort to help awaken the social conscience, which may be lying dormant, and mobilise public opinion on a regional and ultimately on a national scale.

EQUALITY BETWEEN SEXES

It is worth remembering in this connection that equality of status between men and women in this country has been guaranteed in the Fundamental Rights under our Constitution. Where Constitutional rights alone are concerned, Indian women are better off than their sisters in the best developed countries of the West. But their social and economic status in actual life has quite a different story to tell.

In the traditional Indian mind women are either placed on a high pedestal and equated with the heroines of the mythical past and members of the pantheon or relegated to the kitchen and inner apartments as drudges and child-bearing machines. It is rarely that they are accepted as full and active partners in the adventure of life. Even some of the most highly educated men tend to accept the educated women

reluctantly and with a lot of mental reservations. Because education for many people is only a tool for acquiring a new technical skill to earn a higher salary and enjoy such other privileges. It often seems to have little or no impact on the human psyche. It does not seem to make any difference for a man's ethical pattern, his value system or for the social ethos of the community.

SUGGESTIONS

There is, therefore, need for social workers, to educate the public at large on the burning problem of dowry. Here are a few practical suggestions for their consideration :-

1. Collection of pledges (that they will neither take nor give dowry nor be a party to it in any way) from parents of eligible boys and girls and from the children themselves.
2. Presentation of mementos to recently married no-dowry couples, as a token of appreciation.
3. Door-to-door campaigns for survey of the attitudes, to start with, and then for motivation.
4. Registration of marriages, abstention from the practice of dowry being made a condition for the registration.
5. Matrimonial advertisements in newspapers and wedding invitations to contain the words "This is a no-dowry marriage".
6. Service rules in both Governmental and non-Governmental undertakings to make dowry-taking and/or dowry-giving a disqualification for entry or promotion, and

7. Anti-dowry legislation in the various States to be made more stringent, where necessary.

After all is said and done, it will be admitted by any social worker who is a realist that a permanent solution to this problem will involve a radical alteration of the laws relating to property and a basic

change in the social and economic structure. Until that comes about, what are we to do? Can we afford to wait in a do-nothing, fatalistic posture? The answer is 'NO'. There is a lot to do by way of projecting the problem on the wide screen of the public mind and enlisting the support of all thinking men and women for exploring the way towards a speedy solution.



WATCH THOSE FRENCH!

During World War Two, a young girl, an old lady, a middle-aged Frenchman and a German Officer were seated in a train compartment. As the train entered a tunnel, a loud kiss was heard, then a resounding slap. When the train emerged into the light again, every one was silent, but the German had a black eye.

The old lady thought: "How virtuous of her! What a good example she sets for the other girls!"

The young girl thought: "That's funny—Why on earth should the German Officer try to kiss the old lady and not me?"

The German Officer thought: "That Frenchman is no fool. He steals a kiss and I get hit.

The middle-aged Frenchman thought: "I'm so clever. I kiss the back of my hand, hit the German Officer, and nobody suspects me".

Courtesy: "SMILES" Nov, 1976 (Sent by Mr. Andrew Vena)

MANU, THE ANCIENT MALE CHAUVINIST

"Manu, who was supposed to have written the code for the Hindus, didn't seem to have had a very high opinion of women", Mrs Indira Gandhi said on 6-1-77. "He (Manu) did say they shouldn't do this and they shouldn't do that. The only nice thing he did say was that they should have sweet-sounding names".

A peep into the dowry prohibition act, 1961

G. S. RANJAN

(The author is a practising lawyer and an enthusiastic rationalist. He takes pains to collect historical facts to disprove religious theories.

'Dowry' has different connotations among the various communities. For the purpose of the above Act, 'dowry' means 'any property or valuable security given' or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly,

(a) by one party to the marriage to the other party to the marriage,
or

(b) by the parents of either party to a marriage or by another person, to either party to the marriage or to any other person,

at or before or after the marriage as consideration for the marriage of the said parties, but does not include dower or mahr in the case of persons to whom the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) applies.

(Explanation: Any presents in the form of cash, ornaments, clothes or other articles shall not be deemed to be dowry unless they are made as consideration for the marriage)."

It is clear from the above definition and explanation of 'dowry', that the main ingredient of a dowry transaction is the express or implied intention of the parties to make it as 'consideration for the marriage'. In other words the WHY of the giving is a more important indicator than WHO and WHEN of the giving.

The act prohibits the giving, taking, demanding etc., of 'dowry' and makes them punishable; nevertheless, no court will take cognizance of any offence under this Act without a complaint. There is also a period of limitation of one year from the date of offence.

Givers and takers of 'dowry' may not complain against each other because giving and taking are equally punishable. As dowry is usually demanded orally, it is difficult to be proved. Further, it is also easy to smuggle 'dowry' in the garb of a 'presentation' as allowed under the explanation to definition of 'dowry'.

The above facts explain why even after 15 years of its existence, the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 has not developed teeth and as

to why it is difficult to find any case law on 'Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961'.

1. Government have taken a number of measures to curb the evil of dowry. The taking and giving of dowry has been declared as violation of Government Servant's Conduct Rules for the Central Government employees. The State Government have also been advised to take similar action in respect of State Government employees.

2. The Government has under consideration a Bill to replace the existing Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, making the offences cognisable under the Act. The State Governments of Bihar, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab have already made offences under the Act cognisable. A few State Governments have made their own

enactments to make law more effective and stringent. Display of wedding gifts has been banned and penalty has been provided for denying conjugal rights to the wife on the ground of insufficient dowry.

3. Part of the programmes of the National Service Scheme and the Nehru Yuvak Kendra launched by the Government also strengthens the anti-dowry campaign.

4. A proposal is being placed before the National Committee on Women (of which the Prime Minister is the President) for setting up of Mahila Mandals in each village by 1980. One of the important responsibilities proposed to be assigned to these Mahila Mandals is to ensure compliance of anti-dowry legislation.



TAXABLE INCOME

- I. T. O. : I am assessing the sale proceeds of your son to Income-tax.
Assessee : I suppose it is a casual income.
I. T. O. : I too thought so-but he is the seventh son you have sold in the last five years.

SALES TAX ON DOWRY

- C. T. O. : You have not included the sale proceeds of your son in your turnover.
Assessee : That is my personal property-is it not exempted from Sales-Tax?
C. T. O. : I consider him to be an accessory in your business. You have to pay tax on the sale.

A BABA IMPRISONED

With his magic and false promises Chandriah alias Ramananda Yogeswara Swamy was attracting large crowds to his ashram till recent times. He used to take money from innocent people with promises of unearthing treasures hidden in houses, curing ailments and begetting children for those without issues.

The 'swamiji' was known in his home town Chennaram of Nalgonda district as Chandriah. He is 45 years old. He spent some time in Rishikesh in Uttar Pradesh and then moved from place to place in Andhra Pradesh, setting up ashrams. His first ashram was established in Nelakota in Krishna district ten years ago. Here he lured the people with his magic of giving 'vibhudhi' (holy ash) and other uncommon activities.

Later on he shifted to Mutyalampadu (Vijayawada town). His activities here started in full swing in the later part of 1973. He moved about the place in the name of Sri Ramananda Yogeswara Swamy, without disclosing his real name to any one. He even made people believe that he was related to Shri J. Vengal Rao, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. With his magic and

false promises he was attracting a multitude of people to his ashram. He was even begetting children for those without issues through illicit connections with women who visited his ashram.

One Atmala Suryaprakasa Rao of Chinnapuram village of Bandar taluk, came to his ashram with his family members to get relief for his financial difficulties. He believed whatever was said and left his unmarried daughter, aged about 21 years, in the ashram itself to perform puja.

The girl was seduced as the swamiji was an adept in the art. She was later abducted by him to Ibrahimpatnam and then to Chilukurigudem of Vijayawada taluk. He informed the parents of the girl that she had left the ashram without his knowledge. They did not believe his version and accused the 'swamiji' of breach of trust. A furious mob collected outside the ashram and started pelting stones. The accused attempted to commit suicide inside the puja room by cutting his throat with a razor blade.

The police who interfered took the accused to Government Hospital for treatment of bleeding injury on his throat. The abducted girl was traced at Chilukurigudem of Vijayawada taluk. She told the deceitful acts committed by the false swamiji, who was then arrested and sent to judicial custody. A case has been registered under sections 420 and 366 of I.P.C.

Ramananda has now admitted that he is a first class cheat. He has also referred to a number of letters received by him accusing him as a cheat. Like his counterparts in other places, he has a special place inside the cheats' circle!

(Courtesy: 'WISDOM', March, 1977)

WOMEN AND THE BIBLE

SLAVERY

A man can sell his daughter. Ex. 21:7

INSANE SEX IDEAS

Motherhood is sinful, especially if the baby is a girl. Lev. 12:1-5

Eunuchs and virgins are superior to fathers and mothers, according to the New Testament.

Jesus: "There be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake". Matt. 19:10-12

The doctrine of the Virgin Birth brands every natural mother as impure.

The so called word of God says (Paul speaking. 1 Cor. 7:1): "It is good for a man not to touch a woman." Birth control denies that. The Bible lies.

1 Corinthians 7 is a coarse dissertation on marriage.

Jesus and Paul preached asceticism - renunciation of the world and its pleasures for a problematical hereafter. They suffered

from a failure of nerve. They refused to face the realities of life.

There are in heaven 144,000 virgin men whom woman has never "defiled". Rev. 14:1-4 Sex insanity. Probably written by an impotent.

Jesus preached no divorce. Mark 10:2-12 and Luke 16:18. This anti-social teaching has been repudiated by every Civilised state.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton: "..... all the men of the Old Testament were polygamists, and Christ and Paul, the central figures of the New Testament were celibates, and condemned marriage by both precept and example."

Modern prophylaxis and conception control information have revolutionized sex relations, robbing them of terror and fear. The tribal taboos embedded in the Bible may be safely abandoned. Let's be ruled by reason rather than tradition.

Genesis 3:16. "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children". When a Christian hears a woman screaming in childbirth, he reflects that God is getting even with Eve for eating an apple.

INJUSTICE TO WOMEN

Woman should be in subjection because Eve was deceived. 1 Tim. 2:11-4. What suffering that fable has caused!



SHAKE OFF YOUR SHACKLES!

The concept of the Indian woman as an equal partner of a man, and as an active participant in all walks of life has never been so clearly shattered as today. We have, on the one hand, our Constitution mouthing pious platitudes about the quality of women, and a few women scattered here and there, as leaders, and on the other hand, the terrible conditions of the majority of Indian women.

87 out of every 100 women cannot read or write. The horrible practices of prostitution, child marriage, pardah and dowry have cut at the very root of the dignity of women. Feudal culture preaches to women, seclusion at home, and restriction from active participation in public life. Increasingly, penetrating foreign culture, on the other hand, has reduced woman to nothing more than decorative sex objects.

THE NATURE OF OPPRESSION

What are the pillars on which the inferior status of women rests?

- (a) **ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE:** About 72% of Indian women are not economically independent. Even if they

work outside, it is only a secondary source of income for the family. The centuries-old economic dependence on man is the base for all sexual, cultural and political domination.

- (b) **HOUSEHOLD DRUDGERY (OR THE DIVISION OF LABOUR):** Women have been for centuries, isolated in the home, forced to carry out work that is considered unskilled. Because her workday is unending, because there is no one else to look after the children, to wash the clothes, to cook the meals, the woman is isolated from all public activities.
- (c) **WORKING WOMEN:** 90% of the working women are employed on jobs requiring unskilled or very little skilled labour: so are low paid, have no social security, maternity benefits, etc. In spite of the Minimum Wages Act, because these poor working women are illiterate and unorganised, they are given an unequal wage for equal work:

Eg. In Rural Labour:

SEX	WORK	WAGE
Male	Sowing	153 p. per day
Female	"	75 p. per day
Male	Non-agricultural work	188 p. per day
Female	"	118 p. per day

Even among the middle class and educated women there are so many restrictions on the type of work a woman can do. Her work cannot be superior to that of her husband: She must work near the home

and it must be 'respectable' according to the existing age-old conventions, and if no 'suitable' job is found she remains unemployed. Thus we see that the problem of oppression of women is universal, and women of all sections of society face it. The so called 'inferiority' of woman is not due to basic biological differences, but due to the thousands of years in which the division of labour has prevailed and, men and woman have been conditioned to this ideology of male supremacy.

Confined to the narrow limits of the home, the girl gets pots, pans, dolls, mirrors etc., as toys. She is taught to imitate her mother, to learn house-keeping, and to prepare for marriage. She is taught that

tenderness, meekness, submissiveness and total dependence on the male are true feminine qualities. Pictured in advertisements, books and films as a sex symbol she is further degraded.

If women had a choice, they would not like to suffer degradation or sacrifice their rights for the benefit of a sick unjust and male-dominated society. But this oppressive situation will continue as long as the present socio-economic system based on exploitation of the majority by a minority exists. Unless a fundamental change occurs in this unjust social system, women cannot be truly liberated.



TEST FOR GOD

Father: You don't seem to worry about your tomorrow's exams:

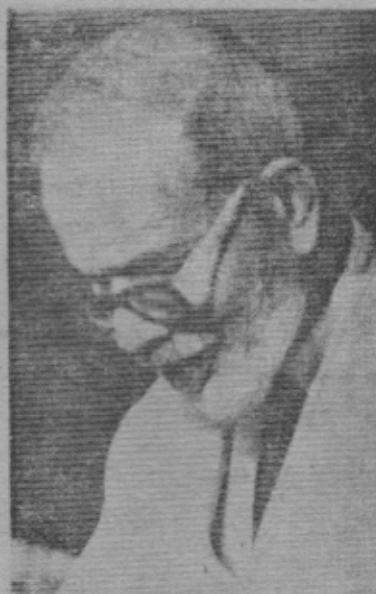
Son: You asked me to pray to lord Venkateswara daily. If I am to work hard, what the hell is Venkateswara's contribution?

RIGHT TO PROPERTY

Judge: The prosecution says you have taken a dowry. What do you say?

Accused: Your honour, my son is my self-earned private property. I should have the fundamental right to sell my property. The anti-dowry is unconstitutional.

DR. KOVOOR ANSWERS



RNA, extracted from that organism into another.

Q : Is it possible to transfer knowledge from one person or animal to another by transplanting brain cells or otherwise?.....Vijaya, Madras.

A : Acquired knowledge, unlike inherited instincts, is regarded to be stored as RNA molecules in brain cells-neurons. Researches of Prof. H. Hyden, Prof J.V. McConnel and Dr. Allen Jacobson have confirmed that "in the nerve cells of the mature organism, experience retained in learning lead to more or less lasting alterations in the chemical composition of the cell's RNA (Ribonucleic acid) content, a fact of great significance for the problem of memory". Both McConnel and Jacobson have succeeded in transferring memory (acquired knowledge) from one organism by injecting

Q : How should a rationalist behave towards his family and society in day-to-day life?—T. Pandian, Madurai

A : Rationalists, being more sensible than religionists, should not be fanatical in their behaviour towards relatives, friends and even strangers. Rationalists should be genuine humanists. True humanists can never be prejudiced by indoctrinated ideas like religion, caste, community or language. You have a right to criticise the superstitions of relations and friends without hating them. Society, friendship and love should transcend religious beliefs.

Q : When 75% of population are illiterate in the country, how can you go about propagating rationalism? — Rani, Madras.

A : Man being a gregarious animal, the herd instinct is very dominant in him whether he is literate or illiterate. Illiterates worship idols, godmen, imaginary gods, and indulge in numerous superstitious practices because most of the educated people do so. Illiterates make better followers than literate men. It is the literates who become leaders in any society. If we propagate rationalism among the educated, the illiterates will simply follow.

Q : Can you tell me the benefits of rationalism? What are the positive aspects of rationalism? -Kumar, Mysore.

A : Ignorant (religious) man spends most of his time and money to better a dubious life after his death. On the otherhand sensible man (rationalist) spends his time and money to better his life here and now. Psychiatrists have found that most of the mental illnesses are caused by superstitious beliefs, feeling of guilt, and fear of punishment by non existing gods, demons, and devils. Rationalists enjoy better mental health than religionists because they have no such fears.



BRIDE GROOMS FOR SALE

All varieties of bridegrooms to suit all pockets are available for sale at Competitive rates from ready stocks.

RUSH FOR YOUR REQUIREMENTS, since Stocks are limited. Special Festival Discount for those who buy before **UGADI/TAMIL NEW YEAR'S DAY**

For particulars write to :

Hindustan Bride grooms Trading Company,
Marriage Bazaar,
Kalyan.
Grams : GROOMS
Phone : 99999

COSTLY HUSBAND

Kalyani : How much you bought your husband for ?
Sita : Rs. 10,000 in cash plus about Rs. 5000 kind
Kalyani : So cheap ! How sad !! Mine costs more than a lac, You know !!!

BOOK REVIEW

"KANDUKURI VEERESALINGAM"—by D. ANJANEYULU

It is believed by some men that a nation which does not have a good memory of its past cannot have a proper vision of its nature. It certainly behoves those of the present generation not to forget the work of the great Indians of the last century who lived and died for a new India. Most of them did not live to see their dream come true.

It was with a view to familiarising the reader with the life and work of these worthies that the Publications Division of the government of India have brought out a number of handy biographies in the "BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA SERIES".

KANDUKURI VEERESALINGAM by D. ANJANEYULU, is the latest in the series. It was released in the middle of January, 1977. The name of Veeresalingam, who hailed from Andhra, has been familiar to those outside the region of his birth mainly

as a social reformer, associated with the practice of widow remarriage. No doubt, he blazed the trail of social reform in the south of India. But he was really a many sided personality—teacher and city father, pioneer in women's education and one of the chief makers of modern Telugu literature. It is hard to think of any other figure among his contemporaries with the same social impact and literary output. He used literature as an instrument of social change.

In this easy and readable narrative, the author, who is an experienced biographer, essayist, literary critic and a rationalist, presents an objective account of Veeresalingam's life and work. He also makes a balanced assessment of his contribution to Telugu literature as well as to the progress of social reform.

Pages : 165

Price Rs. 7/- (Popular)

„ Rs. 11/- (Deluxe)



A friend : Your son is now well settled. Why don't you get him married ?

Boy's father : He is expecting a promotion. I want to wait so that his value will go up in Marriage Market.

News and Notes

"SANTOSHI MATA" IN JAIL

An alleged trickster, who operated as an incarnation of "Santoshi Mata", is cooling off his heels in Badakpur jail in Damoah district of Madhya Pradesh. The charges include kidnapping of a minor girl, and cheating scores of persons.

But what makes the case more interesting is the fact that his "devotees" pay him regular visits in the jail. The trickster Kailash Rawat, assures them that he will soon be out with the help of his "tapa".

Before being nabbed by the Police, Rawat operated for four months as "Santoshi Mata", the latest craze in Hindu religious circles. But the kidnapping of a minor girl proved to be his undoing".

This is a news item appearing on page 9 of the English Weekly "The Current" dated 5-2-77. Of course, this is a male incarnation of "Mata". This trickster could only flourish in the middle of the gullible public and the film "Jay Santoshi Ma" had definitely helped this trickster to flourish. The Government and the Film Censor Board should take notice of the superstition spread by such films and ban them.

—P. Udayabhanu, Chandrapur.

* * *

KIDNAPPER WANTS POPE AS HOSTAGE

A suspected armed robber took a family with three children hostage here today and said he would free his captives only in exchange for Pope Paul or the Italian Interior Minister, Mr. Francesco Cossica.

Francesco Bartoli, 29, told Italian radio the Pope should be available as he had nothing better to do "than pray for his shares in the real estate business".

It is hoped that the Pope, the menace to the mankind, would follow the example of Jesus and agree for "crucifixion" not only to save the kidnapped family but also in the interest of the entire mankind.

* * *

IN THE REAIM OF APARTHEID

One day a Black diplomat thought he would treat himself to a meal in a 'white' restaurant in Johannesburg, but found his way barred by the indignant owner. In vain did Joseph Segars say that he was a US Consulate official. The owner refused to budge. Replying to the US Embassy protest, the South African Foreign Ministry tried to justify the restaurant owner, saying he knew nothing of the official ordinances allowing Black foreign diplomats to sit at

the same table with whites. It looks as if these diplomats will have to carry copies of the official ordinances about their rights in that racist realm.

CROOKS

Fourteen leaders of the West German branch of a sect calling itself the International Society of Krishna Consciousness are shortly to go on trial in Frankfurt on the Main, according to the Hamburg magazine "Der Spiegel". They are charged with fraud, kidnapping and violation of the law concerning storing and keeping arms. The prosecution says the sect's income in the Federal Republic of Germany adds up to hundreds of thousands of marks a month. It is high time that the Government of India also starts investigating the activities of Krishna cult in the country of its birth.

BALAYOGISHWAR OF UMMIDIVARAM, EAST GODAVARI DISTRICT

An inspired rumour has been floating that the pot bellied Balayogishwar comes out once a year on Sivarathri day to "bless" his disciples. It is also a rumour that during the rest of the year he does not eat or drink. It was stated that the Collector of East Godavari District was in charge of the keys to his apartment. The Collector has categorically stated in a letter to Dr. Kovoor that the District administration is not connected with Balayogishwar.

A BELIEVER TURNS A RATIONALIST

Mr. S.V. Rangaiah of Tadpatri, was the President of Arya Vysya Saraswatha Sangham until October, 1976. After reading our magazines and two Telugu books by Gora he has become our member since 11th February, 1977. He has now vowed to fight against dogmas and baseless doctrines and instead spread scientific outlook to establish a religionless society. KUDOS TO RATIONALISM!

BLACKS OF SOUTH AFRICA

A public meeting was arranged by I.R.A. on 20-2-1977. Dr. (Mrs) Gunam, a Medical Officer, from South Africa, spoke at the meeting on 'Blacks of South Africa'. Dr. Gunam is actively connected with the South African Women's Federation, South African National Congress and various other political and social organizations.

APARTHEID LAWS

The Rand Daily Mail, a liberal South African newspaper, recently subjected one of the ordinances of the racist regime to cutting ridicule. Commenting on the existing regulation that industrial establishments should have a toilet for every fifteen workers of one particular race, the paper has calculated that an enterprise employing 17 Coloured males and 16 Coloured females, 19 Indian males and 20 Indian females, 31 white males and 26 white females, 18 Chinese males and 21 Chinese females, and 33 Black males and 46 Black females (all told 247 employees) must have 24 toilets.

STUDY COURSE ON RATIONALISM

We are glad to inform our readers that I.R.A. has decided to conduct a "STUDY COURSE ON RATIONALISM" on 13th, 14th and 15th May, 1977 at Madras. The admission to the course is open to both members and non-members of I.R.A. The course is intended to give a bird's eye view of various aspects of rationalism including atheism. Veteran rationalists from different parts of the country will take classes. The following is the programme for the Study Course :

HOURS		13-5-77 (Friday)	14-5-77 (Saturday)	15-5-77 (Sunday)
FROM	TO			
9-00	10-30	Inauguration	Genetics and theory of Evolution by Dinesh Nettar.	A Critical study of Islam and other Contemporary religion
11-00	12-30	History of Rationalist Movement by S. L. Bharathi	Medicine & Superstitions by Dr T. Jayavelu.	Economic theories by N. Ram.
14-00	15-30	Astronomy & Astrology by Dinesh Nettar.	Critical study of Hinduism by Surendra K. S. Ajnat.	Need for a Rationalist Society by T.S. Selvaraj
16-00	17-30	Psychology by Dr. L. G. Pande.	A Critical look at Christianity by E. Laurant.	Concluding session.
Coffee Break		Between Hours : 10:30—11:00 and 15:30—16:00 On all day.		
Lunch Break				

Course-in-charge : Mr. C. A. SESHADRI

- NOTE :
1. The lecture part in each session will take approximately 45 minutes and the same will be followed by questions, answers and discussions for another 45 minutes.
 2. The course will be restricted to 50 participants on 'first come first served' basis.
 3. The Enrolment fee is fixed at a low level of Rs. 20/- for Non-Members and Rs. 15/- for I.R.A. Members to enable even those with moderate means to take advantage of the course. The fee includes course material and coffee expenses.
 4. The last date for receipt of applications is 30-4-77.
 5. All correspondence should be addressed to:
Mr. C. A. SESHADRI,
Indian Rationalist Association,
28, Pantheon Road, Egmore,
Madras-600 008.

We heartily welcome the following NEW MEMBERS to J.R.A.

M-372	Mr. G. Narendranath, M.A.	Madras (Tamilnadu)
-373	Mr. T. Thangavelu	Rawal Bhata (Rajasthan)
-374	Mr. K S. Gupta	Rawal Bhata (Rajasthan)
-375	Dr. G. Rajeswara Rao	Warrangel (A.P.)
-376	Mr. S. Krishnan	Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)
-377	Mr. Uthirapathy, B.Sc.	Madras (Tamilnadu)

ATTENTION PLEASE

Tamil speaking members of IRA will be glad to learn that arrangements have been finalised for supply of the Tamil Rationalist monthly journal "ARIVYAKKAM" to those who prefer the Tamil journal to FREETHOUGHT. Those who are desirous of getting ARIVYAKKAM in lieu of FREETHOUGHT may please advise the General Secretary, Indian Rationalist Association.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP AND OTHER PARTICULARS REGARDING 'FREETHOUGHT'

(From IV Sec. Rule 8)

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Nationality	—	Indian
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6. Name and address of individuals who own the Newspapers and Partners and Shareholders holding more than one percent of the total capital	—	Indian Rationalist Association, 18, E V.R. Avenue, 28, Pantheon Road, Madras-600008

I, C.A. Seshadri, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date: 1-3-77

(C.A. SESHADRI)
Signature of Publishers

Grams : Grooms

Tel : 999999

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RATIONALIST BOOKS FOR SALE

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do Women Special Number (Nov./Dec. '75)	1 00
do IX Convention Special Number (Nov./Dec. '76)	1 00
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